

Clapton Circuit guide

Introduction

A new circular walk approximately 4.5 km or 3 miles in length has been created in the Gordano Valley linking the village of Clapton-in-Gordano with the Avon Wildlife Trust's Clapton Moor Nature Reserve. New dedicated rights of way have been created around the nature reserve and across neighbouring farmland, and new kissing gates, stiles and footbridges have been installed to create this new publicly accessible route. The project was initiated and overseen by the Avon Wildlife Trust and project managed by the rights-of-way section at North Somerset Council. The project was made possible through generous funding from Yansec.

How to get there

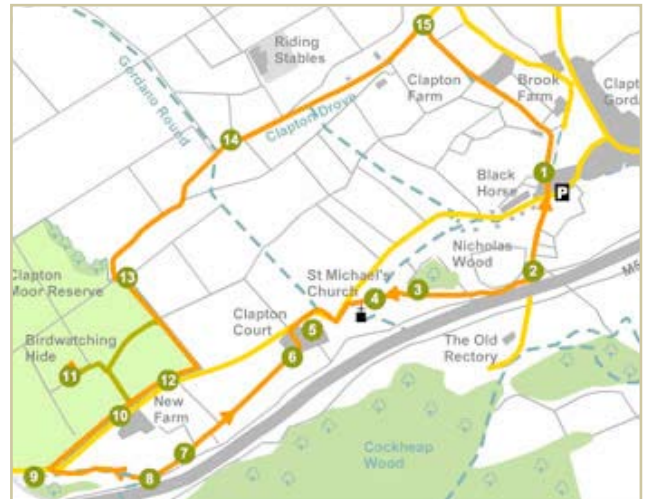
From Portishead take the B3124 towards Clevedon and turn left at the roundabout by Gordano School. In the village of Clapton in Gordano take the second road on the right and the Black Horse Pub is 300 metres on the right. Park carefully in Wood Lane opposite the pub entrance.

The route

Starting at the Black Horse pub in Clapton in Gordano (1) the circuit is best enjoyed by walking in a clockwise direction first walking up Wood Lane towards the motorway bridge. Just before the bridge turn right by an old cottage with the dates 1766 and 1770 on the wall (2). Keep to the left close under the M5 motorway across the first two stiles. Close to the second stile a hoard of Roman coins was discovered in 1922. The first part of the walk is dominated by the noise and sights of the motorway but after passing Nicholas Wood on the right the route bears away from the motorway towards the brow of the hill.

At the brow a magnificent view of the Gordano Valley reaching out towards Clevedon comes into sight. The route then descends the hill towards Clapton Church past Nicholas Wood on the right. Half way down the slope (3) the entire panorama of the valley is laid out before you from the cranes and industry of Royal Portbury Dock, past the growing town of Portishead and sweeping south westwards past the villages of Weston- and Walton-in-Gordano to the outskirts of Clevedon.

The route carries on down the hill and joins the church path at a metal gate. Through the gate turn left up the hill to look around St Michael's Church (4). Turning right the walk descends the road from the Church onto Clevedon Lane and around Clapton Court farm (5).



Aerial view of Clapton Circuit showing the start of the Circuit at the Back Horse Inn (Google maps UK)



After passing the farm the footpath turns left and passes between the cowsheds and a large silo. Go through the gate at the end (6) and turn right and head up hill, through a metal gate and over two stiles and then head for the top of the slope under the motorway (7). From this point New Farm is directly below with the Trust's Clapton Moor reserve beyond. To the right of New Farm is the site of a coal shaft, part of the 19th century coal mining activity. Cross two more stiles and head downhill away from the motorway to continue the circuit. At the top of the slope an alternative footpath (8) leads to a footbridge over the M5 and up to Cadbury Camp. As you walk downhill the valley is once more spread out before you. Walk to the bottom of the hill with the woodland on your left, cross a stile into a narrow field under the wood, and immediately go through a kissing gate onto Clevedon Lane. Straight across the road is a narrow gap in the hedge and steps leading down to a kissing gate and in to Clapton Moor Nature Reserve (9). This is the start of the newly dedicated right of way that leads around the reserve and across adjoining fields to meet the existing rights of way network at Clapton Drove. The route around the reserve runs through 10m wide borders to the upper fields that have been fenced and are managed to provide feeding habitat for owls and other birds of prey.

On entry to the reserve turn right and head towards Portishead and the mouth of the valley. On the left the reserve drops away to the low-lying wet meadows which are actively managed to encourage waders including redshank, lapwing, and snipe to breed. The fields immediately below the path are managed as hay meadows and contain a diverse range of meadow flowers. Notice the difference between the small hedge-lined upper fields and the expansive, lower, wetland area divided by rhynes.

The path doglegs into the next field and reaches the main entrance to the reserve (10) from where a permissive path leads down to a bird watching hide (11). Binoculars and telescopes are useful aids when using the hide in order to get close-up views of birds in the lower wetland fields. Continuing along the top boundary of the reserve the route passes a pole-mounted barn owl nest box (12). Barn owls have successfully bred on the reserve. The route continues round the northeastern boundary of the reserve dropping down towards the bottom of the valley floor where a footbridge (13) leads out of the reserve onto neighbouring farmland. Another new length of right-of-way leads from this point bearing to the right and following the rhyne across the next two fields to meet the existing right of way network at Clapton Drove (14).

At this point the circuit continues along Clapton Drove but walkers can also turn left and follow the footpath across the valley floor past How Harm Farm to the quarry cottages at North Weston from where a footpath leads under Weston Big Wood and eventually back into Portishead.

The route follows Clapton Drove for about 700m. On the right through breaks in the hedgerow the motorway can be seen and Nicholas Wood, Clapton Court, and Clapton Church stand out clearly on the opposite side of the valley. Just past the riding stables a new kissing gate on the right leads to a footpath across the valley to the outskirts of the village. **Do not** take this path but keep on the Drove for a further 400m until another new kissing gate appears on the right (15). The route passes through this gate and across the next three fields before passing through some stabling and finally through a gate into the yard of the Black Horse Pub.

Hopefully the pub will be open and well-earned refreshments can be taken!

(Last updated 17/1/2008)



Clapton Court - 5



view from panorama - 7